

June 13, 1945

Dr. Van R. Potter
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Dear Van;

Thanks a lot for your letter of June 10. I'm feeling a bit depressed at the moment because I feel much less optimistic about my chances than I did when I left Madison. Besides, summer has begun in St. Louis and its hot and sticky. Looking back on it I can find no concrete reason for my earlier optimism. Actually when you first broached the subject and until I got up there I thought it very unlikely that I would get an acceptable offer. There must be something in the air you people have up there that breeds optimism, which however doesn't last too long after the stimulus is removed. It must also be noted that both my wife and I took an instant and considerable dislike to the climate of St. Louis and the dullness of the surrounding countryside and decided long ago not to remain here permanently if we could help it. Consequently wishful thinking has undoubtedly colored my earlier evaluation of the possibilities. This was further intensified by my contact with the relatively young and vigorous group that you have on the campus.

It has always unfortunately been true that I tend to give the impression that I have the problem I happen to be talking about (no matter what it is) so well in hand and with such promising leads that nothing could dissuade me from spending any of my time on anything else. I have consequently always had to contend with this sort of hesitation on the part of people who fear that I would be of little use in the prosecution of established programs which they justly feel ought pushed. In reality, as you already know from looking over my publications, there are less grounds for such fears in my case than in that of most other people. I react relatively rapidly to the problems of the laboratory in which I happen to find myself. I have never hesitated and indeed have always been eager to help in any problem which happens to be going on in which my point of view and peculiar abilities could be of assistance. Such fears have invariably disappeared after I have worked around the group for a while but unfortunately, by the very nature of the problem, there is little I can do concretely (except to point to the past record) beforehand to dispel such hesitations.

I feel certain that you need no convincing on the question of my flexibility and ability to cooperate and I have discussed the problem here with you only because I have it on my mind and have met it so frequently as a first reaction. Its one of the disagreeable consequences of my enthusiasm. In any case, if Dr. Rusch reacted in this manner please assure him that such fears are indeed groundless. If by the way he should desire letters of recommendation from people with whom I have worked he need only send me a note or I could have them sent if you thought it would be helpful. If there is anything I can do to help my chances don't hesitate to ask me because I would want to locate there. Have you any idea roughly as to when I can expect to hear from Dr. Rusch? I mention this simply because certain things have arisen which require that I take a trip east and I would rather wait until this is settled one way or another.

Permit to thank you for your interest and kindness.